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Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, December 11, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Clothes for the Baby." Information from Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor. Menu and recipes from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D.A.

Bulletin available: "Infant Care." Publication No. 8, Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

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How shall we dress the baby? In clothing that is simple and washable, adapted to the climate and season, to the temperature of the house, and to the age and condition of the baby.

On page 26, of the invaluable booklet called "Infant Care" there is a list of the garments necessary for the average newborn baby. I shall not broadcast this list; the bulletin is free, and whoever wants the list may have it.

The other day I was talking with a young mother who was lamenting the fact that her baby was outgrowing all his ~~layette~~ clothes.

"I bought size 1 of everything," she said. "I should have bought size 2, in ready-made garments."

Garments made at home should be large enough at the start to fit the baby for a few months. They do not need to be longer than to cover the feet -- 20 to 24 inches. It is very convenient to have the slip open all the way down the back so that the baby may lie on a small pad, with the slip drawn to each side and tucked under the pad. This protects the clothes.

Have you ever seen ready-made dresses, with rough little edgings around the back? How uncomfortable they must be! No garment should have trimming that can scratch or irritate the tender skin of the baby's neck, nor should any garment be starched.

The baby's first slips or dresses may be of fine white cotton materials, such as nainsook, longcloth, or batiste, or of a fine quality of crinkle crepe, or of pongee or other silk. If the material is not transparent, the dress can be worn without a petticoat, except when one is needed for warmth. If the dresses are made in kimono style, a tuck over each shoulder will permit them to be easily enlarged. Drawstrings, in the neck and sleeves, will also help to adapt the garment to the baby as he grows larger. Nightgowns that open all the way down the back may be worn day and night, during the first few weeks.

As for petticoats -- remember when every baby had to have a supply of flannel petticoats? They are unnecessary, except in extremely cold climates. Muslin petticoats are needed only for the sake of appearance, with a thin fine cotton dress.

Any soft material may be used for nightgowns, such as part-wool flannel, or cotton flannel, or single stockinet. Winter nightgowns for a very young baby may have a string run through the hem, to be drawn up at the feet. Be sure the nightgown comes well below the baby's feet. He must have room to kick.

What about shoes and stockings? Perhaps you are planning to give pretty stockings to some young person for Christmas. Remember, then, that the best stockings for a baby are cotton. Others may be of wool and cotton, or wool and silk, or all wool for use in very cold climates. Stockings, after washing, must be one-half inch longer than the baby's foot. Therefore, to allow for shrinkage, it is well to buy stockings at least three-fourths inch longer. Wool stockings should be washed quickly, and dried on stock stretchers to prevent them from shrinking. Perhaps a pair of stocking stretchers would be an appreciated gift. A loop of tape may be sewed to the top of each stocking, through which to slip the safety pin that holds them to the diaper.

Shoes are next on our list. Babies don't need shoes before they try to stand. As soon as they try to stand, and before they learn to walk, they should begin to wear shoes fastening around the ankle; shoes with soles that are firm, flat and moderately flexible, of medium weight; shoes made of rough leather, such as elk hide, so as not to be shiny nor slippery. A firm, flat, moderately flexible sole permits the baby's foot to take its natural position.

Are you tempted to buy the soft little pink and blue shoes you saw in the baby shop? Don't do it. The soles of soft shoes, such as moccasins, are too soft. They cause the baby's feet to curl up at the sides. Shoes for the baby should be of the "blucher" type, that is, with the tongue and the toe of the same piece of leather, built on a last with straight inner line and wide toe. The heel and upper should fit snugly, so the foot will not slip up and down in the shoe. "Flat foot" is best prevented by this type of shoe. Such a shoe prepares a child to walk on city pavements or hard floors.

How long should baby's shoes be? Always at least one-half inch longer than the baby's foot, and one-fourth inch wider at the toes. Examine the baby's feet frequently; if his toes are overlapping or turned under, he needs larger shoes.

We might say a word or two, or three, about coats, sweaters, and caps. When a very young baby is taken outdoors a square of blanketing may be used as a wrap. In parts of the country where the weather is variable -- cold one day and mild the next -- the baby's clothes must be adjusted accordingly. It is wise to have a sweater to be used as a light extra wrap, indoors or outdoors.

Other garments for the baby's wardrobe are lightweight flannel coats for spring and fall, and a heavy ^{coat of} warm, woolen material, with or without a thick inter-lining of wool, for winter.

There are some important points in the chapter on clothes for the baby, which I have not even mentioned today. But as I said before, if you are interested in clothes for the baby, in food for the baby, in furnishing his nursery, and in keeping him well -- send for the bulletin called "Infant Care."

12/11/29

Now let's see what's for dinner today. Oh yes, here's a meal planned especially for 10-year-old Elizabeth, commonly known as "Betty." Betty is my Next-Door Neighbor's niece. She is coming to visit during the holidays, and my Neighbor has been planning some good, nourishing, appetizing meals for the child. Betty's mother works in an office all day, and sometimes, I fear, she is too tired at night to prepare the proper kind of a meal for her small daughter. For one thing, Betty needs more milk and butter, and green-leaf vegetables.

But that's enough of that. Here's the menu: Oyster Stew; Toasted Rolls or Crisp Graham Toast; Lettuce Salad with Chili Sauce Dressing; Brown Betty and Cream. Do you think Betty will like that? Sure she will.

Here's the recipe for Oyster Stew, with seven ingredients:

- 1 quart milk
- 1 quart oysters
- 4 tablespoons melted butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- Salt, pepper, and chopped parsley.

Seven ingredients, for Oyster Stew; (Repeat ingredients).

Heat the milk in a double boiler. Strain the oysters from their liquor, and pick out any small pieces of shell that may be clinging to them. Heat the oyster liquor slightly, and remove the scum which rises to the top. Blend the flour and butter and stir into the milk, until thickened. Add the oysters and the liquor, and cook for five or ten minutes, or until the edges of the oysters begin to curl. Season to taste, with salt and pepper. Serve in hot soup plates, with finely chopped parsley sprinkled over the top.

There's a recipe for Brown Betty in the Radio Cookbook.

The Chili Sauce Dressing for the Lettuce Salad is simply a combination of Chili sauce and Mayonnaise. Use about half as much chili sauce as mayonnaise.

Tomorrow: "New Window Shades for Old."

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